

Call for papers

International workshop

Scandals and Politicization of (Anti)Corruption. From Loyal Subjects to Mass Politics (14th - 20th Centuries)

Sala Plató, Pati Manning, c/Montalegre, nº 7, Barcelona

12th -13th December 2024

Keywords: Scandals, Corruption, Political Cultures, Public Opinion, State Building

Abuses of power, obscene crimes, heretic behaviours, violent anathemas, in short, any act or speech transgressing established norms, have shocked societies over the centuries, depending on each historical context. Whether the focus was on the courts, chancelleries, or bishoprics of ancient regime polities or parliamentary institutions of Liberal States, scandals exposed the limits of collective tolerance towards political deviations and the questioning of moral values and public ethics. In this sense, studying corruption scandals is an opportunity to understand how power relations and politicization function. Once corrupt practices are revealed, the breakout of a scandal can erode political authority and legitimacy. Hence, the status quo is challenged, and the power is scrutinized.

In turn, contesting governance has not always entailed a desire for justice. The ideals of reparation, demands for profound reforms, the struggle for transparency or citizens' demands for clarification of the facts may initially have been motivated by factionalism or partisan interests. Anti-corruption rhetoric may have disguised unhealthy sentiments such as revenge. It could also be a channel for public notoriety or private gain. Similarly, scandals could be instrumentalized depending on the objectives and goals: to stabilize government power, to serve as a corrective tool, or as a pretext to overthrow the regime. In any case, they could affect the very structures of power.

Based on all these assumptions, this international workshop aims to consider the politicizing potential of scandals. Here, politicization is understood broadly as all the notions and ideas that make people have political awareness and help them define the sphere of the political. They foster public outrage, but proposals and solutions can be alternative and even antagonistic. Considering scandals throughout different national and chronological frames, from the admonitions found in the mirrors for princes (*specula principum*) to mass demonstrations in

the interwar years, by way of the causes célèbres of the Ancien Régime, the aim is to encourage historiographical debate on the capacity of political scandals to mobilize all social classes, revise social values and influence individuals' ideologies. For this reason, participants are compelled to submit proposals privileging the following themes:

- Political cultures and the fight against corruption.
- Religiousness, corrupted politics and the common good.
- Reasons and aims for denouncing misbehaviour in office.
- Rumours, popular claims, and the making/spreading of scandals.
- Scandals as political narratives.
- Comparative cases throughout history.

We welcome proposals of ca. 500 words concerning the topics mentioned above until the 1st of June 2024, along with a short CV. The proposals must be sent to Scandalspolitization@gmail.com. The decision on the received proposals will be announced on the 31st of July 2024. The contributions presented during the workshop will be collected for publication by a leading publisher.

Organising Committee:

Dr Joan Pubill-Brugués (Margarita Salas Fellow, Universtat Autònoma de Barcelona)

Dr Ricard Torra-Prat (Beatriu de Pinós Fellow, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona)

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